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ABSTRACT

In 1980 the Newark (Ohio) City School District established a team management system called REASONS--an acronym for Responsive, Evaluative Accountability System Operating Newark Schools. The goals of the REASONS program comprise systematic planning and accomplishment of objectives, increased productivity, open two-way communication, and peer evaluation and merit pay for school administrators. The program's three emphases include responsiveness, defined as participation by all interested groups in the improvement of the school system; evaluation of administrators and programs; and accountability through open communication of program results. REASONS centers on the identification of the district's missions, starting with a survey of students, staff, parents, and the community for their suggestions. From the survey results the school board adopts mission statements which guide the management team in developing objectives at the system, unit, individual, and daily-operations levels. Individual contracts are drawn up for each administrator based on these four-tiered objectives. Peer evaluation of administrators and merit pay decisions are based on these contracts. REASONS itself is evaluated annually by a special committee. Copies of the survey and contract forms are provided. (Author/RW)

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THE MANAGEMENT TEAM: MAKING IT WORK

by

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The increasing demand for accountability in education brings with it a need for careful scrutiny of a school district's management organization and educational leadership capabilities. School principals and central office administrators often are placed in a position of searching for ways to improve and communicate about school management.

The challenge facing the administration and board of education is to find a workable management system that involves two nearly irreconcilable forces. The first is the difficulty of making good value judgments about anything as complex as the operation of schools; the second is the crying need to do just that. How can school management bring practical and rational approaches to improving schools at a time when many boards, superintendents, and administrative groups are virtually at impasse? The answer seems difficult at best. In Newark, Ohio, however, a viable solution has been developed - R.E.A.S.O.N.S. - a team management system.

Few concepts have received more attention in school board and administrative publications in recent years than the management team. Advocates of team work generally subscribe to the notion that individuals will work more willingly toward the fulfillment of organizational goals, if organizational goals and personal goals are fairly congruent. In addition, research

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demonstrates that trust is developed when individuals have a clear understanding of what the organization's goals are and how they can participate in goal setting. The management team concept lends itself to consensus and to a general philosophy that may best be expressed as: "If you want to do something for someone, you should do it with them or they are going to think you are doing it to them."

Team management should not be something simply read about, discussed, or fretted over. In the fall of 1980 we said, "Let's stop talking about the abstract virtues of team management. Instead, let's settle down to define some specific, clearly stated, formalized structures that will enhance team decision making." We then asked ourselves, "Can we manage change and its expected disruption while at the same time show personal regard for those team members affected by the change?"

Commitments to team management, like many other organizational concepts, are often difficult to document. In our case, this commitment is published in the detailed document known as R.E.A.S.O.N.S. (Responsive, Evaluative, Accountability System Operating Newark Schools). Through the R.E.A.S.O.N.S. program, the Board of Education has formally committed... "the resources of the district to a management system that will assess and improve education....."

Activities of the management team include: needs assessment, planning and goal setting, problem solving, communicating, decision making, evaluating, rumor clearing, interpreting, and recommending. Moreover, emphasis can be shifted from "putting out fires" to accomplishing developmental tasks to improve schools.

This system is based on team oriented management by objective (MBO) principals that will lead to:

- systematic planning, accomplishment, and evaluation of objectives,
- greater productivity through better use of financial and human resources,
- open, two-way communication that is necessary to make effective decisions about education programs and services, and
- peer evaluation of and merit pay for school administrators.

Students, parents, and citizens expect school personnel to perform certain educational services. For many years, evaluations have been made to determine the quality and adequacy of school programs. Due to concerns generated by requests for increased taxes, and the fact that education is essential for students to secure and retain employment, accountability demands continue to grow. Through this program, the adminstrative team expresses a willingness to evaluate its educational program and to report and interpret results openly to the public.

"RESPONSIVE" is the key word in the title of the plan. *"Responsive"* means that there will be specific ways in which everyone who is concerned about the quality of education (students, staff, parents, community members, school advisory committee members, P.T.A. officials, Board of Education members) can help to decide what aspects of the educational system need to be evaluated and improved. We believe that the best decisions are made about the schools only when there is communication among all groups so that decisions can be based on as much information and as wide a breadth of expertise as possible. Through this participation, established objectives will be tied to improving programs and services for students.

"Evaluation" means that the plan not only will enable the administrative staff to assess the effectiveness of the educational program, but that the job performance of administrators will also be evaluated more fully. The annual salary increases of administrators will be determined by merit, based upon performance ratings made by supervisors and peers.

Demands for *"Accountability"* that are placed on the schools to demonstrate their financial and educational effectiveness will be met by the program. Not only will everyone in the community have an opportunity to help to decide what the system will do, but they will also have access to facts about the strengths and weaknesses of the educational program because the results of adopted objectives are reported through open communication.

At the heart of the management plan is a system for defining and refining annually the mission statements of the district. Each April, surveys will be distributed to parents, students, staff members, school board members, and other residents to seek suggestions for improvements in the schools (Figure 1). Surveys are individually addressed to all homes and businesses in the district through an inexpensive bulk mailing procedure. After the survey results are analyzed, the administrative team will then write or revise existing mission statements which are described as "clearly written statements defining the ultimate purposes of the schools." For example, if the school district were to decide that adult education were to be a high priority, then a mission statement might read: "To provide significant educational program opportunities for adults."

When the mission statements are adopted by the Board, every policy, regulation, objective, decision, and action should correlate to these

statements. Although the mission statements are not expected to change drastically year by year, the annual survey will assure that every interested person has an opportunity to suggest changes. Any suggestion received during the year is to be included in the following April survey.

With the mission statements serving as a base, the administrative team will develop a four-tiered set of objectives for its year's work. How well these objectives are met will provide the criteria for evaluation and for adjustments in the salaries of the 42 central office and building administrators. The four types of objectives and their assigned weight in the total evaluation scheme (team members with the concurrence of their peer evaluation committee and supervisors determine the actual percentage for their objectives within the objective range) are:

- System Developmental Objectives--activities, assumed responsibilities that have district-wide scope and importance (accounts for 20-40% of the administrator's total evaluation). *Example: To review the language arts program for grades 7-12.*

- Unit Developmental Objectives--activities, assumed responsibilities that have unit or building scope and importance (20-40%). *Example: To establish a "home/school" advisory council for Keller School.*

- Personal Growth Objectives--an individual's objectives established to improve administrative or leadership skill (5-15%). *Example: To complete the doctoral dissertation as defined in the approved proposal.*

- Operational Objectives--daily tasks based on job descriptions and evaluated with the immediate supervisor (20-40%). *Example: To publish a school newsletter on a monthly basis.*

System objectives are written by the administrative team on the basis of the survey results and a needs assessment that is conducted to allow the professional judgment of the team to enter in the objective-setting process. Meetings are held to consider resource commitments required, review and

priorities to the objectives, and assign "key movers" (the administrator in charge of a particular objective). An administrator may become the key mover by asking for the assignment or by agreeing to serve. The "key mover" position within the program allows the individual administrator the opportunity to contribute, create, and influence district improvements.

Evaluation teams for the system objectives are assigned by the superintendent. For unit, personal growth, and operation objectives, evaluation involves the individual administrator and the immediate supervisor.

From the four types of objectives, individual contracts (Figure 2) are written each year for each member of the administrative team. While the administrator works with his or her evaluation committee and immediate supervisor to determine the weighted valuation of the selected objectives, it is up to the administrator to document all participation and contributions to meeting system objectives. Those who are not key movers may contribute to an objective as members of a committee or in some other function. Final evaluation ratings for all objectives may be appealed to the superintendent in event of disagreements.

The merit pay adjustment is based on ratings of 0 to 10 on the evaluations in the four objective areas. The four ratings will then be averaged to give the percentage of the salary adjustment. If funds are limited or if the average of all merit pay calculations is 5% or higher, however, the Board or superintendent may apply a formula which will assure that the administrators receive a proportional amount of the money available or an adjustment of at least 5%.

If an administrator achieves a rating of 5.5 or higher in operational objectives, he or she will also receive a cost of living adjustment equal to

1/2 of the federally calculated inflation rate for our area. Also, fringe benefits for all administrators may not be less than the benefits approved for other certificated employees. All administrative positions within the program have a daily operational check list from which the operational objective is evaluated.

The R.E.A.S.O.N.S. program itself is also subject to evaluation. The complete management system will be evaluated annually by a committee including: the administrator who served as the key mover for the survey, an elementary principal, a secondary principal, and a central office administrator. A written report and recommendations for improvement of the R.E.A.S.O.N.S. program will be submitted to the superintendent. Written reports are also to be submitted to the school board, all administrators, the staff, and the news media.

More than a decade ago, Warren Bennis predicted the bureaucracy, precipitated by a technologically sophisticated society, will flounder on its inability to adapt to change. He advised that new organizational patterns would need to be developed that can react faster than the traditional bureaucractic forms. We believe that R.E.A.S.O.N.S. is a system that utilizes team management to blend organizational forces to manage activities of schools in a more effective manner. The foremost purpose of the new management system is to improve educational programs and services for students.

Hopefully, team management will make it possible for principals, supervisors, and other administrators to provide effective educational leadership in three important ways. First, there will be systematic planning, accomplishment, and evaluation of objectives. Second, there will be a greater productivity through better use of financial and human resources. Third, there will

be open two-way communication that is necessary to make effective decisions about our educational programs and services.

Through R.E.A.S.O.N.S., a team management system, our school district now has specific ways in which everyone who is concerned about the quality of education -- the public, parents, students, school staff, and administrators -- can help to determine the aspects of our educational system that we need to improve. It is our belief that a good management team can build trust and confidence between and among these groups. Hopefully, the shared decision making and participative management concepts will continue to link staff members to the entire school community and to provide us with a workable means by which to improve the school system.

FIGURE I

R.E.A.S.O.N.S. SURVEY (DETAILED FORM)

The Newark City Schools' Administrative Team and Board of Education seek your suggestions for improving our school system.

This survey is a part of our planning system (R.E.A.S.O.N.S). Please complete this form and return by April to:

R.E.A.S.O.N.S
Newark City Schools
East Main and First Streets
Newark, Ohio 43055

I. MISSION*

* A mission is defined as an ultimate purpose of the Newark City Schools.

Please rank (9 high, 1 low) the current missions of the Newark City Schools as you judge their importance:

___ Develop academic skills
___ Develop skills related to earning a living
___ Develop abilities to live in harmony with others
___ Develop abilities to live in a rapidly changing world
___ Develop strong moral and spiritual values
___ Develop attitudes and skills for active participation in self-government
___ Help the individual understand his role as a responsible family member
___ Develop an awareness of worthy leisure time activities
___ Develop an understanding of environmental and community health and safety practices

I suggest that a new mission for the Newark City Schools be established to:

_____

_____

_____

II. OBJECTIVES

I suggest that the Newark City Schools establish the following objective for the 1980-81 School Year: (Example of a proposed objective: to review the instructional materials for the teaching of health, grades 7-12)

To_____

_____

_____

FIGURE I (continued)

Describe briefly the purpose and need of the proposed objective.

_____

_____

_____

III. If adopted as an objective, would you be willing to work on its accomplishment?

Yes ____
No ____.

IV. Impact of proposed objective:

Educational achievement of students:
Better ____
Worse ____
No impact ____

Understanding and acceptance by community:
Yes ____
No ____
Special communication ____

Financial impact on district:
Significant ____
Minor ____
None ____

Morale of staff:
Better ____
Worse ____
None ____

Work load of building or department:
Substantial ____
Slight ____
None ____

Impact on community agencies:
Positive ____
Negative ____
None ____

V. Describe long-range impact of objective:

_____

_____

Describe short-range impact of objective:

_____

_____

Date: _____ Initiator _____

Initiator relationship to Newark City Schools:

____ Parent
____ Resident
____ Teacher
____ Staff (non-teaching)
____ Student

If you would like to make additional suggestions for improvement, please request additional forms from your building principal.

FIGURE II

SPECIFIC CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Exact provisions of the R.E.A.S.O.N.S. administrative leadership contract state that:

1. Specific developmental objectives must be cooperatively written, administered, and completed to a satisfactory degree of attainment each school year by each member of the Administrative Team (20% - 40% weight of evaluation).
2. Unit developmental objectives must be formulated, administered, and completed to a satisfactory degree of attainment each year by each member of the Administrative Team (20% - 40% weight of evaluation).
3. Each member of the Administrative Team will create and meet to satisfactory completion at least one personal growth objective that will enhance her/his administrative leadership skills each school year (5% - 15% weight of evaluation).
4. Each member of the Administrative Team will complete her/his operational objectives to a satisfactory level of competence as ascertained in accordance with the job performance evaluations (20% - 40% weight of evaluation).
5. Additional committee involvement will be documented and applied to consideration of final evaluation.

EVALUATION COMPONENTS OF R.E.A.S.O.N.S. CONTRACT

Administrative team member _____
Year _____ Position _____
Supervisor _____ Superintendent _____
Evaluation team _____
_____
_____

System Developmental Objectives (20%-40%)	Percentage	Rating	(Percentage) (Rating)
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Unit Development Objectives (20%-40%)			
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Personal Growth Objectives (5%-15%)			
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Operational Objectives (20%-40%)			
_____	_____	_____	_____
*See appropriate job management scale			
Total	100%		

Merit Pay Adjustment Rating _____

(1) Merit Pay Adjustment Percentage _____
(2) Cost of Living Adjustment Rating _____

Total Salary Adjustment Percentage (sum of 1 and 2) _____